



**Montana Department of
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

P.O. Box 200901 • Helena, MT 59620-0901 • (406) 444-2544 • www.deq.mt.gov
June 27, 2008

Dear Reader:

On June 20, 2008 the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued for public comment the document Draft Conclusions and Determination of Substantive Compliance with the Montana Major Facility Siting Act for the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Proposed Rebuild of the Libby (Flathead Electric Cooperative) to Troy Section of the Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line. Due to requests for extension of the comment period, DEQ is extending the comment period until July 5, 2008.

BPA is proposing to rebuild a 17-mile segment of this line between a Flathead Electric Cooperative substation at Libby, Montana and a BPA substation near Troy, Montana. The proposed rebuild would provide stable and reliable transmission service to northwestern Montana for this aging line. BPA evaluated alternative voltages and alternative routing options in certain locations for the proposed rebuild and issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0379) in May 2008. BPA's preferred alternative at this time is the Proposed Action (rebuild to single-circuit 115 kilovolts) with the Kootenai River realignment option. BPA's timeline for issuing a Record of Decision on the proposed project is July 2008. The US Forest Service is a cooperating agency for this project. Their timeline for issuing a Record of Decision on the proposed project is July 2008.

DEQ is a cooperating agency for this project and has assisted BPA in the identification of applicable state substantive environmental protection standards. DEQ has evaluated the proposed rebuild to ensure that substantive state standards of the Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA) (75-20-101, et seq., MCA) are met. Based on information presented in the Final EIS, DEQ has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project would comply with the substantive standards of MFSA if BPA rebuilds, maintains, and operates the transmission line in compliance with the conclusions stated in the document previously sent to you. The document is also available on the DEQ website at <http://deq.mt.gov/MFS/index.asp>.

Comments on DEQ's Draft Conclusions and Determination will be accepted until **July 5, 2008**. Written comments may be sent to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Attention: Nancy Johnson, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, or email to najohnson@mt.gov.

If you have further questions regarding DEQ's preliminary determination, contact Nancy Johnson at (406)444-6797 or Tom Ring at (406)444-6785.

Sincerely,

Warren D. McCullough, Bureau Chief
Environmental Management Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality